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D E A T H

Compared to a SLEEP,

IN A

S E R M O N,

Preacht upon the occasion of the Funeral of

Mrs. MARY ALLEN,

Who died *Feb. 18. Anno Dom. 1695.*

By *Thomas Cheesman*, M. A. and formerly of
Pem. Coll. Oxon. Minister of the Gospel
in *East-Illy. Barks.*

L O N D O N,

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Luke 8. 52.

Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth.

AT the 41th *verse* of this Chapter, *Jairus*, a Ruler of a Synagogue amongst the Jews; having an only Daughter, which lay sick of a dangerous Disease, and at the point of death; falling down at the feet of Jesus, besought him that he would come and heal her; but while Jesus was in his passage towards the house, the Maid gave up the Ghost; at the sight of which, her Parents were filled with perplexing grief and sorrow; and perhaps the rather, because they thought this great Prophet came too late to do their Child good; she was already become Death's Prisoner, and what power can rescue a Captive out of the hand of all-conquering Death? our Saviour being compassionate and tender-hearted, applies suitable comfort to them in the words of my Text; wherein you may observe;

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1. Seasonable Counsel to restrain immoderate grief and sorrow; *Weep not.*

2. The hopeful state and condition of the Person deceased; *she is not dead, but sleepeth.*

I shall raise three Points of Doctrine from the words.

1. *We are very prone to excess in giving vent to our Passions:* We are seldom angry, but our anger is over-hot, bitter and violent: Seldom fear, but we are overwhelmed with amazing discouragement; seldom rejoyce in any creature-comfort, but our Joy does overflow the banks of moderation; we seldom love any thing in the World, but we love it too much: And when we grieve for any Affliction, we grieve too much: Therefore we should watch over our hearts in this case, and strive to keep Reason in the Throne; and let no Passion exercise dominion over us.

2. *'Tis a fault, when we grieve too much at the death of pious Friends and Relations:* Tho' we may shed some tears as a testimony of our natural Affection; yet we must not weep as if we were without hope; but consider, that tho' such
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fall under the stroke of Death; yet they are delivered from the sting of Death; and when they are carried to the Grave, they rest there as in a Bed of rich Perfumes, till they are awakened by the voice of their blessed Bridegroom in the Morning of the Resurrection.

3. *Death may fitly be compared to a sleep*: 'Tis, according to one of the Poets, *Imago mortis*, the Image of Death; and another styles it, *consanguineus Lathi Sopor*, Death's Cousin-germane; they are near of kin one to the other: Sleep is a kind of short Death, and Death is a long continued Sleep: This expression is familiar, both in the Old and New Testament. In the 11th of *John* Christ says to his Disciples, *Lazarus our friend sleepeth*. In *1 Cor. 15. 6.* speaking concerning what clear evidence was given touching the Resurrection of Christ, it is said, *He was seen of more than five hundred Brethren at once, of which the greatest part remain to this present, and some are fallen asleep, that is, dead.* And in the 11th Chapter of the same Epistle, declaring what remarkable Judgments the great

King of Saints had executed upon the *Corinthian* Church, for their unworthy receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; he says at the 30th verse; *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*, that is, were cut off by death, for that bold presumptuous sin, however many make so slight of it in our days. *Stephen* that first Martyr, which carries a Crown in the very signification of his Name, while the malicious Jews were casting a shewre of Stones to destroy him; you may find it in *Acts 7. ult.* *He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; and when he had said this, he fell asleep*; that is, he laid down his life for the defence of Gospel Truth. Likewise amongst those Miracles which were wrote when the Lord of Glory was crucified, this is one, recorded by the Evangelist *St. Matthew, c. 27. v. 52.* The Graves were opened, and many bodies of Saints which slept arose, not to lead an Animal life, or that they should again return to their Graves; but as *Diodate* speaks upon the place, that they might accompany Christ when he ascended up to Heaven.

I shall shew what resemblance there is between Sleep and Death, in these following particulars.

1. Sleep seizes upon all sorts of men; high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned: A man may possibly continue without Meat and Drink longer than without Sleep: Within a few hours, the indispensable necessities of Nature still calling for it; thus *it is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the Judgment*: Tho' the Body of Adam was at first composed of jarring Elements; yet if he had never lost his Original Righteousness, by the merciful gift and appointment of God, he had still been preserved; (whatever Soemians dream to the contrary) in a state of Immortality; but since the Fall, sin entering into the World, made way for the universal Monarchy of Death; so that now, 'tis not the dazzling Wedge of Gold, nor swelling Titles of Honour, nor an Eloquent Tongue, nor a beautiful Face, nor a valiant Hand, nor a subtle Brain; that can privilege any from the stroke of Death; Death goes as boldly into the Palace of a King,

as into the Cottage of a Shepherd, nor does it make any difference between the Judge upon the Bench, and the Prisoner at the Bar; the greatest eminency of Grace and Holiness, cannot keep off the Assaults of Death. *Enoch* and *Elias*, tho' they were bodily translated into Heaven, yet we may suppose in their passage thither, they did undergo some change equivalent to Death; the same which shall befall those Saints that are found alive at the second coming of Christ.

2. When men desire to sleep, they go naked into their Beds; laying aside all Ornaments and costly Attire: Thus we shall be as naked in our Burial, as at our Birth; and as we brought nothing into the World, so it is certain we can carry nothing out: Houses and Lands, Flocks and Fields, Corn and Cattel, will not go down with any into the Grave; therefore they that have Riches should be ready to distribute, willing to communicate and relieve the necessities of others; for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased; and let all be stirred up to get the Wedding Garment of Christ's Imputed

Imputed Righteousness, get the Testimony of good Conscience, which is sweeter than Musick at a Banquet of Wine; get an assurance of God's favour, and adorn your Souls with the Jewels of the New Covenant, which can never be lost or taken away.

3. Sleep can only seize on the Body, but it has no power over the Soul; the spirit of a man can both hope and fear, rejoyce or grieve, discourse and deliberate about things when the Body is captivated in the deepest slumber. *Tertullian* useth it as an Argument to prove the Soul's Immortality; How can that be subject to real Death, which is not subject so much as to the least shadow, likeness, or similitude of it? Whether that Reason be cogent or not, to be sure, Temporal Death can exercise no Jurisdiction over the Soul; that is near akin to the Angels, and shall live for ever. Some men of corrupt minds have thought that the Soul of Man sleeps with his Body in the Grave, till the Resurrection; there it lies senseless and sluggish, not capable of joy or sorrow. Pope *John* the 22.

to give the Christian World a proof of his Papal Infallibility, declared himself the Patron of this Opinion; being so hot and vigorous in the maintaining of it, that he suffered none to take their Degrees in the University of *Paris*, unless they did first subscribe this brutish Doctrine; but by the Pope's leave, let the Holy Ghost decide the Controversie. *Paul* says expressly, that when Believers are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. And Christ tells the good Thief upon the Cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*: His Body was to lie it may be in the same Grave with the other Malefactors, but his Soul had this priviledge, to go with Christ himself into Paradise, a place of unspeakable delight and pleasure. When Christ and some of his Disciples was upon the Mount of Transfiguration, the Souls of *Moses* and *Elias* appeared, discoursing with him about the sufferings which he was to accomplish at *Jerusalem*: Likewise when Christ would stop the mouth of the Sadduces, who denied the Resurrection, he quotes that place out of *Exodus*; *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; presently from
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thence inferring, he is the God of the living, and not of the dead; so that the Souls of those Renowned Patriarchs, were at that time living, tho' their Bodies for many hundred years had lain rotting in the Grave, *Rev 6. 9, 10. When he had opened the fifth Seal, I saw under the Altar, the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* These Scriptures sufficiently prove that the Soul of Man is never subject to the sleep of Death.

4. Tho' men sleep in the night, they commonly awake in the morning. Thus, tho' the People of God fall asleep during the long Night of Death, yet they shall be awakened in the Morning of the Resurrection: When Christ shall descend from Heaven with a mighty shout, the voice of an Arch-Angel, and the Trumpet of God, all both good and bad shall appear with the same numerical Bodies which they had when they lay down in the Graves; both the Justice

and Mercy of God require this: For, if the Body have joyned with the Soul to carry on a Trade of Rebellion against God; if it has been a slave to Sin and Satan, and a servant to fulfil unrighteousness; what can be more just, than that the same Body should be joyned again to the Soul, to be its Companion in a state of everlasting Misery and Torment? and on the other side, if the Body have been possessed in sanctification and honour; if it has been a living Temple of the Holy Ghost, if it have joyned with the Soul to serve and worship God; the Mercy of God requires that the same Body be united to such a Soul, and be its Companion in a state of everlasting Bliss and Happiness. *Job* was very confident of this, *chap. 19. 25, 26. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter days upon the Earth; and tho' after my skin Worms destroy this Body; yet in my flesh shall I see God.* If *Job's* Faith concerning the Resurrection were so strong, ours may well be stronger, all circumstances of it being made known to us, by New-Testament Revelations; and we need not question but that the same Almighty

Almighty Power which fashioned our Body in our Mothers Womb, can as easily give it us again, and restore it to us, tho' it has been consumed in the Grave; for what can be difficult to him whose will is his work? as *Cyprian* speaks, *Deo voluisse est fecisse.*

5. Men after sleep oftentimes have greater comfort and refreshment. Sleep is one of Nature's best Physicians; it recruits our spirits that are spent, and restores our strength that was decayed. Thus the Bodies of God's People, when they are awakened after the long sleep of Death, shall be in a better condition than ever; for tho' they shall be the same for substance, yet their qualities shall have a wonderful change; they shall be raised strong and powerful, swift and speedy in their motion, it may be beyond any Bird that flies in the Air, or any Star that moves in the Heavens; they shall then have no defect or blemish; they shall be raised spiritual bodies, supported by the immediate influence of the Soul, without Meat, Drink, or Physick, and other natural helps which now

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they stand in need of; for they shall be like the glorified Body of Christ.

6. Men go to sleep that they may take their rest: Thus, the People of God, when they sleep in their death, shall rest from all sin and suffering, from the Persecutions of wicked men; from being buffeted by Satan's Temptations: They shall no more stand in fear of his fiery Darts; they shall rest from all trouble and disturbance, all pain and labour, *Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labour, and their works shall follow them.*

7. The more pains men take, and the harder they work all the day long, the better they sleep at night. *Solomon* tells us, *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet*: Thus, the harder men work for God, the more they work for their Souls, and make provision for Eternity, during the time of life, the more refreshing will their sleep be when the night of Death comes; therefore Christians, shake off sloth and negligence;

gence ; do all the good you can ; the remembrance of any one good work, when you come to die, will comfort you more than thousands of Gold and Silver : Fill up your time with good and gracious actions, bestir your selves, as it becomes those which believe that future Glory, tho' it be not dispensed according to the merit, yet according to the measure of good works ; they shall sit upon the highest Thrones of Celestial Honour, and wear the brightest Crowns when they come to possess the promised Kingdom, which have done most for God in their present Generation.

8. If a man over-charge himself with eating and drinking just as he goes to sleep, that will make his sleep very uncomfortable, and full of disturbance : Thus, if we make too large a Meal of Creature comforts, and get a surfeit by feeding immoderately upon the profits and pleasures of this World, it will make the sleep of Death uncomfortable to us : An inordinate Affection to any earthly Treasure, will as certainly kill and destroy the Soul, as the practice of Adul-

tery, Murther, Witchcraft, or any the most heinous Abomination that can be named; therefore Christians, tho' the World come into your Houses, yet keep it out of your Heart; make use of it, only as a Servant; let it not exercise any commanding power over your spirit, or bring you into bondage.

Now to apply what has been spoken.

1. Let me perswade you to look upon Death, not as 'tis presented in the Glass of Nature, but as it is presented in the Glass of Scripture; in the Glass of Nature, the Picture of Death is drawn with a grim countenance; 'tis the King of Terrours, it comes as a fiery hissing Serpent, carrying the Sting of Divine Vengeance in its mouth; but as presented in the Glass of Scripture, it comes to the People of God as a Messenger of glad Tidings; it calls them from dwelling in a strange Countrey, that they may go to live in their Fathers House; where the Tongue of an Angel cannot express what magnificent preparation is made for their Entertainment; it comes

comes to turn their Water into Wine, all their Sorrow into Joy ; and wipe all Tears from their Eyes ; it will take a heavy Cross from off their back, and set upon their head a flourishing Garland made of the Flowers of Paradice, which shall never fade, nor wither away.

2. Let me speak something in relation to our dear Sister, the Solemnity of whose Funeral, is the occasion of our present meeting together ; she was a fruitful Mother in *Israel*, which brought up many Children in the fear of God ; her great care was to season their tender Years with Religious Education ; she was eminent for Humility and Patience, and for wearing the Ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price : She had a love to God, a love to his Ways, Word and Worship, a love to his People, to all that had the Image of Christ shining forth upon them ; and we have reason to conclude that Grace was rooted in her heart, which did so sweetly blossom at her Lips in holy religious discourse ; she is now landed upon the Shore of a happy Eternity,

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nity, never to meet with Storms, or go to Sea any more: Weep not for her, but rather for your selves, and for those Calamities which the sins of the Nation may bring upon us, unless almost a Miracle of Divine goodness prevent it.

3. The sleep of Death is common both to good and bad. You read that *Jeroboam* that Idolatrous King of *Israel*, slept with his Fathers. The like is affirmed of *Baasha*, and *Omri*, and other wicked Princes; so that the body of the most ungodly person may be said to sleep in the Grave, but how? just as a condemned Malefactor may fall asleep in his Prison the night before his Execution; which tho' he seem never so safe and secure in his own thoughts, and hug many golden Dreams in his sick deluded fancy; yet as soon as ever he awakes in the morning, he must be drawn to the place where he shall endure some cruel tormenting Death: Thus, tho' the Bodies of wicked men sleep in the Grave for a while, yet at the day of general Judgment, they must be raised only that they may be capable to endure the Torments of
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Eternal Damnation. That therefore Death may prove a happy sleep to you,

First; Make great preparation for it, because there is a great God to whom you must be reconciled; you have committed great sins, which must be pardoned and forgiven; great temptations, that must be resisted; great difficulties lying in your way to Eternal Happiness, that must be passed through: Besides, Death will bring a great change upon you, then you must change Time for Eternity, Earth for Heaven or Hell, where glorious Angels, or black deformed Devils must be your Companions for ever: Much true Wisdom lies in the consideration of your latter end; *ut Mortem nunquam timeas, semper cogita*; that you may never fear Death, make it familiar to your thoughts.

Secondly; Be sure to sleep in Jesus; that expression you have, *1 Thes. 4. 14. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* And now to sleep in Jesus, briefly, is to have

an experimental knowledge of him, to love him sincerely, and believe on him: Receive this Pearl of price with an empty hand, joyning none of your good works with his Merits in the matter of Justification: Receive him, not only as a Saviour, to deliver you from the Wrath of God, and the Curse of the Law, but as a Supreme Lord and Governour, that you may yield unfeigned Obedience to his Commands: And be perswaded of this, that none shall be admitted to Reign with Christ in Heaven, which do not set up a Throne for him to Reign in their hearts while they are here upon Earth.



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